

## CUSD Cares Podcast

### Chandler Care Center: How Can it Help You?

Season 1, Episode 3 – Recorded June 25, 2019

---

Music:	00:06	[Music].
Brenda Ramos:	00:06	Hello parents. Welcome to the CUSD Cares podcast. Today, we are incredibly lucky to have Katie Kahle, the Director of the Chandler Care Center with us today to talk a little bit about what the Chandler Care Center does for our students and families. Welcome Katie.
Katie Kahle:	00:25	Thank you.
Brenda Ramos:	00:26	We are so excited to have you. Why don't you tell our parents a little bit about yourself and your background just so they can kind of get an idea of who runs the Care Center.
Katie Kahle:	00:36	Sure. So, my name is Katie. I'm actually an Arizona native and I live in the city of Chandler and have for about 13 years. I'm an Arizona State University graduate and have an MSW, Master's of Social Work. So, I came to the Care Center almost seven years ago in 2012 and have just really enjoyed my time working in the community in Chandler and working with CUSD families and schools and staff.
Brenda Ramos:	01:01	Well, we love our social workers and we're so happy that you're here.
Katie Kahle:	01:06	Yeah.
Brenda Ramos:	01:07	You've definitely helped in so many ways. So many different are of our students and their families. if you could just give our parents a little bit of an idea of the Chandler Care Center, you know, what it does, the services that you provide so they can kind of have an idea. And of course, I think we might've forgotten where you're located.
Katie Kahle:	01:25	Sure. So the Care Center is located next to Galveston Elementary School off of Galveston, between Arizona Avenue and McQueen. We're on the far east end of their campus and so

we have a separate stand alone building where all of our services are provided from, and we're very fortunate to be there because it's a community that really can utilize a lot of the resources that we provide. Our mission at the Care Center is to promote students, school readiness, attendance, and academic success. And we do that by providing medical treatment, social services, parent education programs and referrals. So we actually started at San Marcos Elementary School in 1995. That was where the Care Center originated and moved over to our location by Galveston Elementary School in 2010 and have a beautiful 8,000 square foot building where we provide a whole variety of services. So I'm happy to talk in detail about them or cover whatever you'd like me to cover.

Brenda Ramos: 02:23

Yeah, I mean the Chandler Care Center from its inception to what it is now, it, I mean it certainly has come a long way with the help of so many community members, parents, educators and staff in order to make this happen. So we are incredibly lucky in our community to have such a Care Center that really, whose whole purpose is to serve students so that they are ready, able and willing to receive when they're in the classroom. So, thank you. I, I really want you to talk about as we get ready for beginning of the school year and which a lot of parents might be looking as far as where can they get immunizations to, you know, sometimes hearing and vision testing and all of the different types of services just so that they're aware as to what we offer at the Care Center.

Katie Kahle: 03:13

Sure. I'd be happy to talk about that. So we're actually pretty blessed in CUSD because the Chandler Care Center has a children's medical and dental clinic and so because of that we are able to provide access to a whole variety of medical and dental services that help keep kids healthy so that they can show up at school and so they can succeed in school. And as you mentioned, a couple of those are really key for back to school and as our parents are getting ready to send kids back to school, we do provide an immunization clinic that's actually a partnership with Chandler Regional Medical Center, and we've had that partnership for I think over 20 years. And what they do is they come in and provide free immunizations to kids who are either uninsured or under insured. So basically that means any child who, has any vaccine that's required that's not covered by their insurance, they can receive vaccines for free in our clinic. And so our schedule is actually, typically on Thursdays, but it does vary throughout the year. We added a couple of Tuesday evenings and some Saturdays, especially back to school time.

Brenda Ramos: 04:15

That's pretty amazing. Who's actually giving immunizations?

Katie Kahle: 04:18 There are nurses from Chandler Regional Medical Center who provide them. And in addition to providing them free to children, we do have the ability to provide immunizations free to adults if they are uninsured or under insured as well. And then when flu season starts up, of course we offer free flu shots because we want to make sure that everybody has access to those. Important to note with the immunizations, anybody can come into the Care Center for those. They don't have to be a city of Chandler or a CUSD resident.

Brenda Ramos: 04:42 Wow, that's pretty fantastic.

Katie Kahle: 04:44 Yeah. And then we also, as you mentioned, we do free hearing and vision screening. That's also through Chandler Regional Medical Center, and that's typically on Tuesday mornings, again, sometimes on Saturdays also. And so all of those schedules can actually really easily be found on our website. With CUSD parents, we share them through Peachjar [electronic flyers]. We send out our calendar every month to our CUSD families and we also have a pretty active Facebook page where we are always sharing our events and updates there. So, that is a really easy way for parents to find out when those services are available.

Brenda Ramos: 05:14 Yeah. Quick and accessible for most parents. And I know you offer some dental and some medical as well. resources for parents.

Katie Kahle: 05:25 Yeah. And so our medical and dental clinic, are really, I think just such an amazing program to have and we're very fortunate in Chandler to be able to provide those services to our kids. Our medical clinic is for children who are birth through 18, who either live in the city of Chandler or go to a CUSD school. And what we are able to provide is basic medical care so we can treat sick children, we can do well visits, we can do sports physicals for free for our student athletes if they're in a CUSD sport. Yeah, it's great. And those services are available to children who are uninsured only. So unfortunately we can't serve children who are insured, but our goal with that is really to make sure that our uninsured children in the community have a place to go if they need access to those resources. And then our dental clinic is a partnership with Chandler Regional Medical Center and St Vincent de Paul out of Phoenix. And so it's a really great program. five days a week we have dental services available and they range from preventive care exams, x-rays, oral health education, those pieces all the way up to restorative care. So if we've got a kiddo who's got a tooth infection that's keeping them from going to school because they're in pain and we're able to treat that. And those services

are also for children who live in the city of Chandler or go to one of our CUSD schools, primarily for birth through 18.

- Brenda Ramos: 06:44 Certainly some huge benefits to CUSD students.
- Katie Kahle: 06:52 Absolutely.
- Brenda Ramos: 06:52 And the fact that you are local, and parents can come and easy accessibility for students so that they can return to school as quickly as possible.
- Katie Kahle: 07:03 Yeah.
- Brenda Ramos: 07:03 We know parents are very busy now these days, right. Working and shuffling students around from point A to point B or being a caregiver and helping others, and supporting their family. So the fact that we have the Chandler Care Center available for our families I think is just a huge benefit in them having another resource to reach out to.
- Katie Kahle: 07:27 Absolutely.
- Brenda Ramos: 07:28 Now, when we talk about, how can parents connect, you know, whether or not a parent is using your services or maybe a parent is looking to connect because maybe they have some free time on their hands and they want to help or assist in any way. We know that we are incredibly lucky in our community to have community members, whether they're parents in our district and/or people that are retired or just live in our community that just want to give back and lend a helping hand if they have an afternoon that's free. Where can they find information? if you can kind of direct us to the different ways that people can just look and see what's out there with the Chandler Care Center.
- Katie Kahle: 08:06 Sure. so we actually can be found on the CUSD website. There is a tab on there for Parents and Students, Resources and we're listed there. You can also go to our website directly by visiting [chandlercarecenter.org](http://chandlercarecenter.org). and then we have a Facebook page and Instagram and a Twitter. So if they find our website, on the CUSD webpage, if they find the Care Center website, they can access any of those. They can access the Facebook or the Twitter from those. And then also linked to Instagram. And as I mentioned before, Facebook is a really great way to follow up on what we have going on. It's probably our most utilized social media resource by our families. And so we do post our calendars and our events. If anything ever changes with our

schedule, we post on there, we post pictures, volunteer opportunities, if we have donation needs, particularly when we go into the holiday season, when we're looking at things like collecting turkeys for Thanksgiving distribution, if we need help with that or volunteers for Thanksgiving distribution, we post those items on there as well. And we also always invite, you know, community members to stop by if they would like to, and visit our office and get a tour and find out a little bit about what we do. I can talk all I want about what we do at the Care Center, but I think for most people visiting us in person and really seeing it in action and seeing how beautiful our medical facility and our dental facility and our food bank and all those other pieces are, really makes it more real. And maybe can help them identify a way that they want to get engaged.

Brenda Ramos: 09:41

It definitely is a state of the art facility. In addition to the logistics and being behind the scenes and seeing how everything happens and all the different people that it takes in order to, you know, put on in a specific event and/or the day to day operations of your Care Center, whether it's through the volunteers or the people that you have on staff. I know that you have a strong crew at the Chandler Care Center. You know, one of the things that, you kinda touched upon that I'd like to just to share very briefly, some of the special events that the Chandler Care Center, really is strategic either in partnering with other agencies and/or spearheading themselves as far as what they bring to the community so that families and students can certainly benefit from the, some of these events in what they are.

Katie Kahle: 10:31

Sure. So since it's summer, I'll mention first we are a summer meal participant. We partner with CUSD Nutrition to provide summer meals. And so that runs June through the middle of July for us. And we provide free lunches to kids birth through 18, from 12 to 1:00 every day. That does change every year, so I would encourage parents to take a look at CUSD Nutrition's website for updates on those locations. We also participate with a group called For Our City Chandler. It's actually a partnership between the city, the school district, nonprofits and faith based organizations throughout the city. And that partnership allows us to meet regularly and plan events together. And so, one of those that we have that comes up at the beginning of the school year every year is Operation Back to School, Chandler. And that's an event that's held at Chandler High School every year the Saturday before school goes back. And it's a morning event where families can come out and if they have children registered for school, those children can get a backpack packed with all the school supplies they need for the first day of school.

And then there are resources available at the event, shoes up until we run out of shoes, which is always one of those things we run out of them pretty quickly.

Brenda Ramos: 11:45

I bet, yeah.

Katie Kahle: 11:46

Haircuts, if we have enough people there to give haircuts, socks and underwear. So it's a really great opportunity for families in need to come out and get that assistance. And then as our own events, the Care Center does a Thanksgiving Family Assistance Day. It's always the Saturday before Thanksgiving every year. And that's an opportunity for our families in need to sign up and they can register to get a Thanksgiving food bag that essentially has all of the ingredients they need to make their Thanksgiving meal, including a turkey. And in addition, it's an opportunity for our community to get involved because we usually serve somewhere between 400 and 600 families on that morning. And so we need help.

Brenda Ramos: 12:24

That's phenomenal.

Katie Kahle: 12:24

It is, and it's a huge undertaking and it's always so amazing to see how the community turns out for it.

Brenda Ramos: 12:30

I know a lot of students have certainly put in, got in, some volunteer hours and been able to assist in different student groups from different campuses, which I think is very eye-opening for them to realize that there are people locally here within their community that, you know, need. And I think they walk away with a lot of gratitude in helping serve in some capacity.

Katie Kahle: 12:50

They do. And they can serve either by donating items, which a lot of schools do. They do donation drives for us or by coming and volunteering the day of. And then we also utilize volunteers to get ready because if we have 400 families showing up, that means we have 400 bags of food to pack. So, it's quite a lot of work to get done.

Brenda Ramos: 13:06

Yeah, I imagine it's a busy assembly line, right?

Katie Kahle: 13:09

It is. November is a very busy time of year for us. So, and then we also do a toy distribution in December right before schools get out for the winter intercession. And again, families with children who live in the city or go to a CUSD school can register with us. It's for kids birth through 18 and we do gift cards for

the older children because gifts are really difficult to buy for an older child.

- Brenda Ramos: 13:29 We are. Once you have a teenager.
- Katie Kahle: 13:31 Right. And so we give those out. And annually we get about a thousand kids that we help through that. And that again, we have partnerships with several businesses and with the schools who donate items for those. And then Chandler Fire Department really is our key partner in that. They do a toy drive at Chandler Fashion Center for that and then they help us with the distribution the day of, and with set up.
- Brenda Ramos: 13:51 That's pretty amazing.
- Katie Kahle: 13:52 Yeah.
- Brenda Ramos: 13:52 Between that donation drive, the one for the holiday in addition to the one for Thanksgiving. And it's a great opportunity for families, community members to really get involved and, if they can pitch in, whether it's through time, right, by helping organize and you know, being available on a particular afternoon or morning and/or giving in some capacity, whether it's monetary and/or through, items. But, we definitely want our students, to walk away with that sense of serving others in some capacity. Right? We know that when we give, whether it's our time or whether it's items, we certainly have huge takeaways.
- Katie Kahle: 14:31 Absolutely.
- Brenda Ramos: 14:31 So, I'm so glad that the Chandler Care Center has, been able to assist our families and being able to do that. That is just incredibly special. Ways that community members can get involved outside of some of the capacities that we've already with either volunteer opportunities or donations. You know, we have a lot of parents that are very, integral pieces in our community, either through their business or, or you know, through their, religious affiliation. But a lot of times, right, when we gather more than one, we know that we can make a bigger impact. So how can, people in small and large groups get involved?
- Katie Kahle: 15:21 So there are a couple of ways to get involved. The primary one is we do have a food bank that's open year round and so we are fortunate, as a part of the school district, we're open 12 months

a year. And so our food bank runs 12 months a year and we have need for volunteers in that capacity.

Brenda Ramos: 15:37 Is there an application process at all either for students or adults or how does that work exactly in case people wanted to know?

Katie Kahle: 15:43 Yeah, good question. So there is not an application process. We do require ongoing volunteers to read and comply with the CUSD volunteer policy. But, those volunteers are primarily interacting with adults because it's a food bank and most of the people who come through are adults or adults with their children with them. And so, you know, the requirements are simply that they agree to the volunteer agreement. Because we, because of how we get food, they do have to agree to some, non-discrimination disclosures, which are pretty simple to agree to. But otherwise there's not an application. They can come in and do a one-time volunteer. They can do an ongoing...

Brenda Ramos: 16:21 What's the minimum age requirement, if we had a team?

Katie Kahle: 16:23 Great question. So, uh, we don't have a minimum age requirement if they come with a parent. We have had younger children. There's not always a lot for them to do if they're really small because, you know, it does involve packing and lifting and doing those kinds of things. But sometimes littler kids just want to come and be involved. And so we welcome them to do that. If they are planning on coming alone, they have to be able to drive. So 16 or older would be our requirement, and the parents have to know that, you know, they're going to be in a building with other adults. So we would require parents to, you know, agree to that and be cognizant of the fact that those kids are going to be working in a building with adults.

Brenda Ramos: 16:59 Are there any Saturday's filled, or is it usually Monday through Friday?

Katie Kahle: 17:02 So not for our food bank, except for during the holiday season when we do our thanksgiving distribution in particular and our toy distribution. Otherwise our food bank is open Monday through Friday. Uh, we do occasionally have volunteer opportunities on Saturdays. We are open generally one Saturday a month and we do events ranging from the immunization clinic through Chandler Regional, to sometimes we do car-seat clinics with Chandler Fire Department or water safety days. And we do occasionally need volunteers for those. That would be something I would encourage parents and students if they're interested to keep an eye on our Facebook

page for because that's where we typically tend to post those opportunities.

- Brenda Ramos: 17:42 Okay. Well there's lots of different ways parents and students or you know, people in the community can get involved. It sounds like, at least different points during the school year. I want to make sure that, you know, we leave parents -- are there any information that you think would be surprising, and/or that you would want parents out, the parents and community members to know that maybe they would be surprised to hear about? As far as the Chandler Care Center or, anything that we probably didn't mention already?
- Katie Kahle: 18:13 So the only thing that we really didn't cover is we do also have programs year round for children zero through five. We're funded as a family resource center, and that funding comes partially from First Things First Arizona. And then we also get some supportive funds from Toyota Financial Services, Chandler Service Club, and a couple of other organizations. And so we provide programs year-round for children zero through five that focus on early language development, literacy skills. We do fund programs like during the summertime we have a puppet theater coming in and we have story time and we have Phoenix Zoo and the Arizona science center and those sorts of things that come to the Care Center so that families can access those for free. And we have classes throughout the year that we provide for free, both in the Care Center and also in some of our schools within the district. Targeting right around...
- Brenda Ramos: 19:03 Could you give an example? For like, of what some of those classes, what would they be the topics on?
- Katie Kahle: 19:07 Sure. so one that we have is called Learning Together, and it's actually a 32 week program for three to four year olds who are not enrolled in a school program already at like a preschool program.
- Brenda Ramos: 19:16 Okay.
- Katie Kahle: 19:16 And so that class focuses on literacy skills, but it also focuses on kindergarten readiness. You know, teaching kids even the basics of listening to another adult besides their parents, or interacting with other children their age. Because some children, you know, don't necessarily have a lot of other kids to interact with. So those are important skills for them to learn at an early age. And then it integrates things like reading a story, and then doing activities like art or cooking or science projects or coloring. So it really focuses on all those, it's a once a week for 32 weeks. We

also offer some parenting education classes, especially things around child development. And as a mom myself, you know, I remember hearing about the terrible twos beforehand.

Brenda Ramos: 20:01

[Laughing]

Katie Kahle: 20:01

And then realizing when my daughter turned three that they really meant like the three natures are what we needed to learn more about. And so, you know, having that education for kids to make them or for parents, I'm sorry, of those children to help them realize that their child's development phase is normal and they're normal and here are some productive ways to deal with it. And some positive parenting techniques has been really effective for us. So we do offer those classes. And there are other courses for children throughout the year. We do a reading, Raising a Reader, that kind of teaches parents how to get their kids to be book lovers, which of course as part of a school district we love, right? We want those kids reading and we want parents reading and sitting in, you know, going through a book with their kids. And that starts as early as six months for that class. So we can really get those children in there pretty early to start developing those skills with their parents.

Brenda Ramos: 20:50

It's really fantastic that we're able to partner with parents to teach to, you know, help them along that road. Because raising a child, you know, nowadays is not as easy as it was maybe when our parents raised us.

Katie Kahle: 21:02

Right.

Brenda Ramos: 21:03

There's so many other factors, email and so many, so many things that I'm not just are influence, but that make day to day, you know, sometimes a little bit more challenging and just just working every day. And I know, especially if you're raising one or multiple.

Katie Kahle: 21:19

Yeah.

Brenda Ramos: 21:20

And, being able to just kinda juggle a schedule and we know that, there are obviously challenges that we want to partner and support parents throughout this process.

Katie Kahle: 21:29

Absolutely.

Brenda Ramos: 21:29

Because we know it's not easy, and we certainly know no one can do it alone.

Katie Kahle: 21:36 Right. Absolutely. And I think it's really important for parents, you know, to know that they're not alone in that. And to have that, a lot of our parents who come to those programs, their kids develop friendships. But so do the parents. And, and I would, I also want to mention, I would be remiss if I didn't say it's not just parents, it's really any caregiver. And so we have grandparents who come quite frequently. We have foster parents who come. Sometimes we have aunts or uncles who are the ones who are at home taking care of the children who bring the children with them. So it's really open to any caregiver who spends time with that child and wants to work on developing some of those skills and recognizing that, you know, those caregivers are really the first teachers for those kids and they're the ones that set them up for success in school, which is why it's so important for us to provide programs for that age range so that when those kids are going into kindergarten in CUSD they, the parents and the families feel a little bit more prepared for that.

Brenda Ramos: 22:27 Thank you for mentioning that about caregivers. Because you're right, it's so important. And sometimes it's not just one caregiver, right? Sometimes it's a couple or combination, but, any, any individual that is, going through the day to day and making sure a student, a child is, receives the best so that they're ready for school and life. That's who we're here to support. So, absolutely. I'm so glad you're doing this important work. You and your staff works so incredibly hard. There's so many pieces. I would encourage our parents and families out there if you have an opportunity, have time on your hands or have a great business that's looking to support, an awesome cause to reach out to Katie Kahle and the Chandler Care Center. They're doing some great, wonderful work. And I would just encourage you to stop in and check it out. But I appreciate you tuning in with us at CUSD Cares. Remember, our goal ultimately is for our students and our families to really know that in Chandler, we want our students to connect. We want them to be active learners, be able to receive help, really be able to respond and empower them. But ultimately we want them to serve. So that when they're all done, whatever they choose to do in life, that they can either come back to our community and or any other community and be good stewards. we thank you for joining us today, Katie.

Katie Kahle: 23:51 Thank you for having me.

Brenda Ramos: 23:53 Stay tuned for our next CUSD podcast. Have a great day, everybody.

Music:

24:07

[Music]